

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 AF-08 SAJ-01 ACDA-07 OMB-01

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05

PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 DLOS-06 SAL-01 EB-07

OES-06 /119 W

----- 093539

R 231509Z AUG 76

FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7845

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

USMISSION GENEVA

AMECONSUL LENINGRAD

AMEMBASSY LONDON

USMISSION NATO

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 13303

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR PLOS PL UR GR NO IN

SUBJ: NEW SOVIET STRESS ON FREEDOM OF PASSAGE?

REFS: A) ATHENS 8744; B) MOSCOW 11298; C) MOSCOW 9807

BEGIN SUMMARY. ACCUMULATING EVIDENCE FROM SOVIET DEALINGS WITH GREEKS, POLES AND INDIANS SUGGESTS NEW SOVIET STRESS ON FREE PASSAGE ACROSS SPECTRUM OF MARITIME NEGOTIATIONS, REINFORCING STANDARD SOVIET POSITION IN LOS, AND GOING BEYOND SENSITIVITY TO SEGEAN NAVIATION IN WAKE OF KIEV DARDANELLES PASSAGE. WHILE THIS MAY BE NATURAL REFLECTION OF SOVIET EMERGENCE AS GLOBAL NAVAL POWER, IT WILL ALSO EMBROIL SOVIETS WITH RIPARIAN STATES MORE THAN IN PAST. AND, WHILE WE LACK SPECIAL INSIGHT INTO SOVIET APPROACH TO SVALBARD, CONFIDENTIAL

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WE SUSPECT IT WILL ALSO REINFORCE STRATEGIC FACTOR (AS

COMPARED WITH ECONOMIC) IN SOVIET APPROACH TO THESE
NEGOTIATIONS WITH NORWAY. END SUMMARY.

1. WE ARE STRUCK BY PRIVATE EVIDENCE ACCUMULATING IN RECENT
MONTHS FOR MAJOR INCREASE IN SOVIET PREOCCUPATION WITH
FREEDOM OF PASSAGE ON HIGH SEAS. DEMARCHES TO GREEKS
REPORTED IN ATHENS 8744, OR RATHER WILLINGNESS TO OFFEND
GREEK SENSITIVITIES IN THE INTEREST OF FREEDOM OF NAVIGATION
IN THE AEGEAN, IS ONLY LATEST PIECE.

2. ON AUG 11, POLISH FIRST SECRETARY HERE (IN CONTEXT
OF EFFORT TO DEMONSTRATE TO EMBOFF THAT THERE WERE DIFFERENCES
IN POLISH AND SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY APPROACHES, EVEN
IF THEY DO NOT APPEAR ON THE SURFACE OF THE TWO COUNTRIES'
"COORDINATED" FOREIGN POLICIES) SAID RECENT POLISH-SOVIET
DISCUSSIONS OF MARITIME MATTERS HAD MADE PERFECTLY CLEAR
THAT THE SOVIETS ARE ALMOST SOLELY CONCERNED WITH FREEDOM
OF PASSAGE, WHEREAS THE POLES ARE ALMOST SOLELY CONCERNED
WITH FISHING RIGHTS.

3. FIRST TEETALE SIGN WE SAW THIS SUMMER WAS BEHIND-THE-
SCENES FUMBLING OVER TREATMENT OF INDIAN OCEAN ZONE OF PEACE
DURING MRS. GANDHI'S VISIT IN JUNE, AS REPORTED MOSCOW 9807:
IN UPSHOT, SOVIETS REITERATED 1973 BLESSING FOR ZONE OF
PEACE CONCEPT, BUT INSERTED PHRASE "IN CONFORMITY WITH GENERALLY
RECOGNIZED PRINCIPLES OF INTERNATIONAL LAW" INTO SOVIET-
INDIAN DECLARATION IN ORDER TO SAFEGUARD FREEDOM OF PASSAGE
POSITION IN LOS NEGOTIATIONS. SUBSEQUENTLY, USA INSTITUTE
NAVAL TYPES MADE SOVIET ATTACHMENT TO FREE PASSAGE THE
MAIN FOCUS OF COMMENTS ON INDIAN OCEAN (MOSCOW 11298).

4. COMMENT. FREE PASSAGE OF ALL VESSELS IS OF COURSE
STANDARD SOVIET LOS POSITION, AND DARDANELLES PASSAGE OF
KIEV MAY HELP EXPLAIN SPECIAL ATTENTION TO AEGEAN NAVIGATION.
WHAT IS STRIKING, THEREFORE, IS NOT SOVIET POSITION IN
GENERAL OR IN SPECIFIC INSTANCE, BUT ACCUMULATION OF INDICATORS
THAT CONCERN OVER FREEDOM OF PASSAGE IS BECOMING A REFERENCE
POINT FOR SOVIET ATTITUDES IN WIDE VARIETY OF CASES.
PERHAPS THIS EVOLUTION IS ONLY NATURAL CONCOMITANT OF SOVIET
EMERGENCE AS GLOBAL NAVAL POWER, BUT IT IS ALSO LIKELY TO
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DRAW THE USSR INTO UNACCUSTOMED SQUABBLES WITH RIPARIAN
STATES LIKE GREECE. AND, ALTHOUGH WE HAVE NO SPECIAL
EXPERTISE ON SOVIET APPROACH TO SVALBARD, AND LITTLE ACCESS
TO REAL SOVIET PERCEPTIONS, WE SUSPECT THIS NEW CONCENTRATION
ON FREE PASSAGE ISSUE WILL REINFORCE STRATEGIC ELEMENT
(AS COMAPRED, SAY, WITH ECONOMIC) AS DOMINANT FACTOR
IN DETERMINING THE WAY SOVIETS HANDLE THESE NEGOTIATIONS,
AS WELL AS LOS.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: INNOCENT PASSAGE, FREEDOM OF NAVIGATION, FOREIGN RELATIONS, NEGOTIATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 23 AUG 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ShawDG
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976MOSCOW13303
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760321-1222
From: MOSCOW
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760829/aaaaayul.tel
Line Count: 116
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 ATHENS 8744, 76 MOSCOW 11298, 76 MOSCOW 9807
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ShawDG
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 21 APR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <21 APR 2004 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <23 AUG 2004 by ShawDG>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: NEW SOVIET STRESS ON FREEDOM OF PASSAGE?
TAGS: PFOR, PLOS, PL, UR, GR, NO, IN
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006